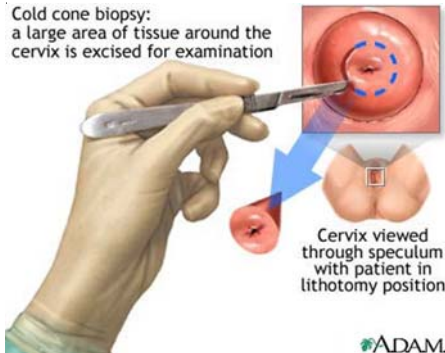


Utah Cancer Control Program

Cone Biopsy Fact Sheet

Cold cone biopsy:
a large area of tissue around the
cervix is excised for examination



The cold cone biopsy is a surgical procedure requiring general anesthesia and is indicated by the presence of precancerous changes in the cervix.

WHAT IS A CONE BIOPSY?

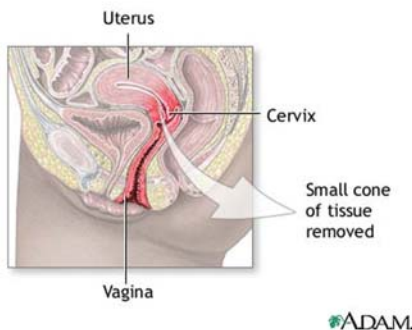
Conization is an operative procedure that removes suspicious sections of cells covering an abnormally large area, or those extending into the cervical canal. The surgery can be performed under general anesthesia in the operating room with traditional instruments or with a laser. Use of laser surgery has reported success rates of up 96% with infrequent complications.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Using a scalpel or laser the doctor removes a cone-shaped piece of the cervix containing the area with abnormal cells. Stitching flaps of tissue over the wound repairs the resulting crater. After the procedure there may be some light cramping, vaginal bleeding, discomfort and discharge for up to one week after the cone biopsy. Sexual intercourse, douching, and tampon use should be avoided for at least one week. This allows the cervix time to heal.

THE ADVANTAGES

The abnormal tissue in the cervix lining is removed. This procedure may help your doctor in diagnosing further problems or complications.



In the cold cone removal procedure, a small cone-shaped sample of tissue is removed from the cervix and examined under a microscope for any signs of cancer.

THE DISADVANTAGES

If too much muscle tissue has been removed, the procedure can lead to an incompetent cervix, which can be a problem with subsequent pregnancies. This means that the cervix may not seal properly to maintain a pregnancy. If untreated, the condition increases the odds of miscarriage or premature labor. There may be other complications as well. More surgery may be necessary because the doctor may have removed too little tissue, some of the pre-cancerous cells may remain and the cancer may come back if not removed. Additionally, the doctor may remove too much tissue and damage the vagina.

COMPLICATIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

Complications with cone biopsy can include bleeding and problems with subsequent pregnancies. About 1 in 10 women experience bleeding from the vagina two weeks after the biopsy. There is a slight risk of infection or perforation of the uterus. In a few women, the cervical canal becomes narrowed or completely blocked, which can later interfere with the movement of sperm. This can impair a woman's fertility.